



Sarah Kenney &lt;skenney@barringtonhills-il.gov&gt;

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1 message

**Robert Kosin <rkosin@barringtonhills-il.gov>****Fri, Apr 1, 2011 at 7:52 AM**

To: Dolores Trandel &lt;clerk@barringtonhills-il.gov&gt;

Cc: Sarah Kenney &lt;skenney@barringtonhills-il.gov&gt;

Bartlett candidates: U-46 disconnect unlikely

By Ashok Selvam

Daily Herald

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The ongoing debate over whether the village of Bartlett should leave Elgin Area School District U-46 continues to be an issue ahead of Tuesday's election.

T.L. Arends, an incumbent on the Bartlett village board, and challengers Joe Felice, Gregory Martin and Eric Shipman were asked at a recent candidates forum about the issue that's lingered since the mid-1990s.

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Bartlett residents have formed committees and village officials have commissioned studies about the pros and cons of breaking away from U-46 and creating its own school district.

Though supporters believe students would receive a better education, the consensus has been property taxes would need to increase too much to make it reality.

"If we could, I'm for it, but the fact is we can't afford it," Martin said.

Martin, a 46-year-old artist, said unless the state buys the schools and helps out, property taxes would increase too much to make the plan feasible.

Arends, 62, a vice president for business development at Harris Bank, joined the village board in 1991. She said deannexation is not likely and that U-46 officials told Bartlett they would sue the village if they tried to disconnect.

"Because our portion of the budget to U-46 is more than the percentage of students, there is no court in the land that's going to say, 'Sure you can disconnect and you can cause the Elgin taxes to be higher,'" Arends said.

Shipman, 44, a West Chicago police sergeant, agreed with his fellow candidates, saying that besides the money, legal issues in Springfield would prevent disconnection. Legislators need to change laws to make it possible, he said.

"I think it would be great if we had our own Bartlett school district, but I just don't see that as a practical happening right now," Shipman said.

Felice, 50, agrees leaving U-46 is unaffordable.

"It would bankrupt us all. Our taxes are high enough, Lord knows that," Felice said. "Severing from U-46 would be like, well, my hair growing back. It's just not going to happen."

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